



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH &  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## State Mental Health Institutes Complete Cost-Effective Technology Upgrade

**NASHVILLE—** The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities announces the recent completion of a major technology upgrade to maintain and process critical patient information that surpasses the capabilities of the prior system and is already proving to be cost-effective.

Patient records have been converted from an aged, outdated software program to a new Avatar system. This Web-based program maintains a centralized data system for all five Regional Mental Health Institutes located across the state.

Prior to this major implementation, a main patient database was maintained in the Nashville central office, and patient information was entered into separate systems at the five RMHIs. Data was transmitted on a daily basis via network from each RMHI to the central database, a process that consumed an ever-increasing number of man-power hours.

RMHI staff can now enter data into one integrated system, located at the State's Data Center in Nashville, which provides real-time information for all users that include census, admissions, discharge and transfer information, as well as more advanced billing capabilities. Avatar offers greater flexibility in capturing and using information. The new system also permits TDMHDD to be up-to-date and remain current with constantly-evolving Medicare requirements.

"Significant cost savings are being achieved by maintaining less equipment and utilizing one system rather than six," stated TDMHDD Commissioner Virginia Trotter Betts. "The department is now poised to react quickly to frequent mandatory changes we encounter while serving the needs of our patient population."

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